CIDAC 00641
Centro de Documentação
1986
Ref. TL2478

CONGRESSMAN
TONY HALL NEWS

Third District, Ohio | 1728 Longworth House Office Building | Washington, D.C. 20515 | 202 225-6465

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE:
TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 1986 A.M.

#86-7
CONTACT: MARTY RENDON

125 HOUSE MEMBERS EXPRESS CONCERN OVER EAST TIMOR TO REAGAN ON EVE OF PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO INDONESIA

WASHINGTON--A bipartisan group of 125 House members told President Reagan they were "deeply concerned about the human tragedy in East Timor," a predominantly Roman Catholic former Portuguese colony which was invaded by Indonesia in 1975.

The lawmakers urged the President to use his forthcoming trip to Indonesia to discuss with officials human rights abuses in the territory, including reports of disappearances, summary executions, torture, and forced birth control.

Reagan is the first President to visit Indonesia since President Ford's trip in 1975, shortly before the invasion of East Timor.

At least 100,000 out of an original population of less than 700,000 have died in East Timor stemming from the Indonesian invasion and subsequent military operations in the territory. The invasion was carried out largely with American supplied military equipment.

The letter from the House members expressed alarm at a program to limit the East Timor population which is being carried out "often without the consent or knowledge of the mostly rural pouplation."

"A program of this nature carried out by the invaders themselves has troubling implications, considering the huge death toll in East Timor since the invasion and the comparatively small original population," the letter said.

The lawmakers also cited reports by Amnesty International and others of "hidden" prisons and detention camps to which international humanitarian groups do not have access. The letter charged that political prisoners are being moved to the secret camps in an effort to disguise the real number of East Timorese detained for political reasons.

Secretary of State George Shultz raised the issue of human rights in East Timor during his visit to Indonesia in July 1984. Pope John Paul II and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher have also expressed concern over the ongoing tragedy in the territory.

-more-

ADD 2
EAST TIMOR

"We respectfully ask you to add the plight of the people of East Timor to your agenda," the lawmakers wrote Reagan. "You have a special opportunity to bring to bear on the Timor tragedy the prestige and moral influence of the United States."

The text of the letter follows:

Dear Mr. President:

We continue to be deeply concerned about the human tragedy in East Timor, the predominantly Roman Catholic former Portuguese colony invaded by Indonesia in 1975. Since then, an estimated 100,000 East Timorese -- nearly one-sixth of East Timor's original population -- have perished from the combined effects of the Indonesian occupation. Armed conflict in the territory persists, as do reports of atrocities such as disappearances, summary executions, torture, and forced birth control.

Highly regarded international church sources confirm that serious human rights abuses continue. While there has been some ostensible improvement in access to East Timor by international humanitarian agencies, such access remains limited. Unrestricted access is critical in light of reports that malnutrition-related deaths of children persist in at least some areas.

We therefore respectfully urge you to give serious attention to the East Timor situation in meetings that you and the Presidential party will have with Indonesian leaders during your visit to Indonesia in May. As the first U. S. President to visit Indonesia since the December, 1975 invasion of East Timor, your interest could contribute significantly to efforts that might prevent further bloodshed and misery in East Timor.

Secretary of State Shultz deserves credit for raising the issue of human rights in East Timor during his July, 1984 visit to Jakarta; that same month, Pope John Paul II expressed deep concern over the suffering of the people of East Timor. Further, in April, 1985, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher raised humanitarian and human rights issues regarding East Timor during a visit to the Indonesian capital.

Continued fighting in the territory between the Indonesian military and the East Timorese resistance is reason for concern, coupled with persistent reports from Amnesty International and other organizations of human rights violations. Accounts of various pressures and intimidation directed at the Roman Catholic Church in East Timor by Indonesian authorities are most disturbing. Also troubling is the matter of political prisoners. While the official number of East Timorese political detainees has dropped, Amnesty International and others report that a significant number of detainees purportedly released have in fact been moved to less identifiable places of detention. There have been accounts of "hidden" prisons and detention camps to which international humanitarian groups still do not have access.

Further alarming is the news of a population limitation program introduced in East Timor by the Indonesians. Authoritative church sources say that this program is being carried out often without the consent or knowledge of the mostly rural population of East Timor. A program of this nature carried out by the invaders themselves has troubling implications, considering the huge death toll in East Timor since the invasion and the comparatively small original population. Mr. President, we ask you to urge the Indonesian government to put an end to population limitation measures and practices in East Timor that do not have the full consent and knowledge of those directly concerned.

We seek efforts to ensure the continuation and expansion of access to East Timor by international humanitarian agencies, with guarantees of freedom of movement for these agencies so that the full range of their activities may be carried out to the greatest possible extent. In particular, all prisoners and detainees should be assured timely visitation. In addition, we strongly believe that the Roman Catholic Church in East Timor should be guaranteed an existence free from official pressure and

-more-

intimidation. Finally, the United States should encourage efforts to bring about a fair and peaceful settlement of the East Timor conflict.

We fully appreciate the importance of friendly relations with Indonesia. We are also aware that there will be many other issues on your agenda when you travel to Bali. However, we respectfully ask you to add the plight of the people of East Timor to your agenda. You have a special opportunity to bring to bear on the Timor tragedy the prestige and moral influence of the United States.

Sincerely,

Tony P. Hall
Robert K. Dornan
Claude Pepper
George C. Wortley
William H. Gray, III
Helen Delich Bentley
Joe Moakley
Tony Coelho
Mary Rose Oakar
Barbara Boxer
Barney Frank
Gus Savage
Robert J. Mrazek
Edolphus Towns
Peter H. Kostmayer
Gerry E. Studds
Jim Moody
Doug Walgren
Howard L. Berman
Mike Lowry
Walter E. Fauntroy
James J. Howard
Fernand J. St Germain
Julian C. Dixon
Parren J. Mitchell
Thomas J. Tauke
Berkley Bedell
Fortney H. Stark
Joe Kolter
Jim Cooper
Steny H. Hoyer
Thomas A. Daschle
William Hill Boner
Ron Wyden
Norman Y. Mineta
Sala Burton
Barbara B. Kennelly
John M. Spratt, Jr.
Timothy E. Wirth
Bob Carr
Martin Frost

Christopher H. Smith
Matthew F. McHugh
Frank Horton
Howard Wolpe
John Edward Porter
Alan Wheat
Byron L. Dorgan
Douglas H. Bosco
Robert A. Roe
Robert T. Matsui
Ronald V. Dellums
John F. Seiberling
Tommy F. Robinson
Vic Fazio
James L. Oberstar
Morris K. Udall
Charles E. Schumer
Bob Edgar
Henry A. Waxman
Sam Gejdenson
William J. Hughes
Robert W. Kastenmeier
David E. Bonior
Gary L. Ackerman
Edward F. Feighan
Mervyn M. Dymally
Bruce A. Morrison
Chester G. Atkins
Benjamin A. Gilman
Earl Hutto
John Conyers, Jr.
Martin Olav Sabo
Austin J. Murphy
Thomas R. Carper
Donald J. Pease
Gerry Sikorski
Jim Bates
Leon E. Panetta
James Weaver
Mickey Leland
Rod Chandler

Edward P. Boland
Silvio O. Conte
Peter W. Rodino, Jr.
Claudine Schneider
Tom Lantos
Mike Synar
Nicholas Mavroules
Lane Evans
William Lehman
Robert Garcia
Charles A. Hayes
Anthony C. Beilenson
Bruce F. Vento
Don Edwards
William Clay
Matthew G. Martinez
Albert G. Bustamante
Mel Levine
Thomas M. Foglietta
Patricia Schroeder
Brian J. Donnelly
Marcy Kaptur
Thomas J. Manton
Major R. Owens
Thomas J. Downey
James H. Scheuer
George Miller
Stewart B. McKinney
Stephen L. Neal
Douglas Applegate
Thomas A. Luken
John McCain
Ted Weiss
Dave McCurdy
Louis Stokes
Bill Richardson
Dan Glickman
Bill Green
Augustus F. Hawkins
Edward J. Markey

###